



WISCONSIN STATE ASSEMBLY

STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
**DAVID BOWEN**  
10TH DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **Statement from Rep. Bowen on Darling/Kooyenga/Abele MPS Takeover Plan**

MILWAUKEE – Rep. David Bowen (D-Milwaukee) issued a statement today in response to the proposal by Sen. Alberta Darling (R-River Hills) and Rep. Dale Kooyenga (R-Brookfield) to turn struggling MPS schools over to charter or voucher school operators overseen by Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele:

“This proposal from my suburban colleagues and the County Executive is deeply misguided. Charter and voucher schools are not a magic bullet that will solve the problems faced by struggling schools in the Milwaukee Public School system. Two of the top three public high schools in Wisconsin—Ronald Reagan College Prep and Rufus King International—are MPS schools, while some of the worst schools in the state are part of the voucher program. Governance issues are not the problem with MPS, and taking control of our schools away from the local, democratically-elected Board of Directors and handing it to an unelected commissioner is not the solution. Dr. Darienne Driver, our new superintendent, and the first African-American woman and youngest to ever serve in that position, has been in office less than a year. Our role as legislators should be listening to her and giving her what she needs to help Milwaukee’s students succeed, not undermining her authority.

If Sen. Darling and Rep. Kooyenga want to help MPS, their first priority should be fix the funding flaw that creates differences in how much money our segregated schools have to support students. We know poor school districts have less resources than wealthy districts due to property tax dependency. Another priority should be eliminating the cuts to the historic Chapter 220 integration aid program from the state budget. Milwaukee remains one of the most segregated cities in the nation, and that is reflected in the enormous achievement gap between the city’s black and white students. If our goal is to ensure that every student can get a quality education regardless of race, the last thing we should be doing is cutting the only program that has had any success at reversing the shameful legacy of segregation in our schools.”

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